

However, Applicants respectfully submit that Fisher merely discloses that, "polymer systems...bond directly to the fibrils making the fibrils *easier* to disperse with improved adherence" (emphasis added). See column 7, lines 10-18. Thus, Fisher is merely indicating that certain qualities make it *easier* to disperse the carbon fibers. This in no way discloses or suggests substantially uniform dispersion.

Furthermore, the Office Action asserts that the test data submitted with the May 3, 2007 Request for Reconsideration was a) not in the form of a declaration and b) did not compare the claims to Fisher. Accordingly, Applicants submit the Declaration executed by Mr. Toru Noguchi filed herewith.

In particular, the Declaration states the results of Mr. Noguchi's experiment using the sulfonated carbon nanofiber in accordance with Fisher. As stated on page 2, "a number of large sulfonated carbon nanofiber aggregates in the compound. Therefore, it was found that the sulfonated carbon nanofibers are not uniformly dispersed in the compound" (emphasis added). Figs. 1-5 illustrate the many aggregations of the sulfonated carbon nanofiber.

Thus, it would have been impossible for one of ordinary skill in the art to obtain uniform dispersion of sulfonated carbon nanofibers in the elastomer composition using the method disclosed by Fisher. Accordingly, Fisher does not disclose or suggest a carbon nanofiber substantially uniformly dispersed in the elastomer, as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claims 7, 8, 27 and 28.

Furthermore, Brennan does not cure the above-noted deficiencies of Fisher, because Brennan is silent regarding a carbon nanofiber substantially uniformly dispersed in the elastomer.

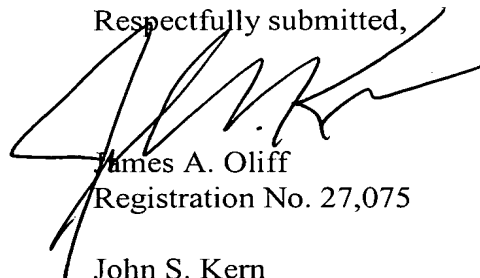
In view of the above, Claims 1, 7, 8, 27 and 28 are allowable. Claims 2-6 and 9-10 depend from claim 1; claims 23-24 depend from claim 7; claims 25-26 depend from claim 8; and claim 29 depends from claim 28 and are therefore also allowable by virtue of their

dependencies as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-10 and 23-29 under 35 U.S.C §103(a).

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-10 and 23-29 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff  
Registration No. 27,075

John S. Kern  
Registration No. 42,719

JAO:DCT

Attachment:

Declaration Under 37 C.F.R. §1.132

Date: January 15, 2008

**OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC**  
**P.O. Box 320850**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850**  
**Telephone: (703) 836-6400**

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